

Early seaplane work:—A 1911 biplane with 35 h.p. Green engine, flown by Commander Schwann at Barrow. (*Flight* photograph.)

yet could crawl round the course slower than any other machine. Several people said we ought to sell lots of them. I thought we would be lucky to get an order for half a dozen. Raynham also attracted a considerable amount of publicity by gliding from Hendon to Brooklands, arriving several thousand feet up.

The late Mr. John Lord became greatly interested in our aircraft venture, although he was in partnership with my brother H. V. in Everard and Co. at Brownsfield Mills. However, gradually John Lord spent more and more of his time with the Avro concern until he deservedly became one of the best-known and most popular members of the aircraft industry.

About this time we fitted a pair of floats to an Avro biplane which we had supplied to Commander Schwann at Barrow, and this machine made the first flight off water in England. We also supplied Germany with a seaplane, which was the first machine to fly from Germany to Heligoland. They built a number of machines very like it and used them during the Great War, which broke out shortly afterwards.

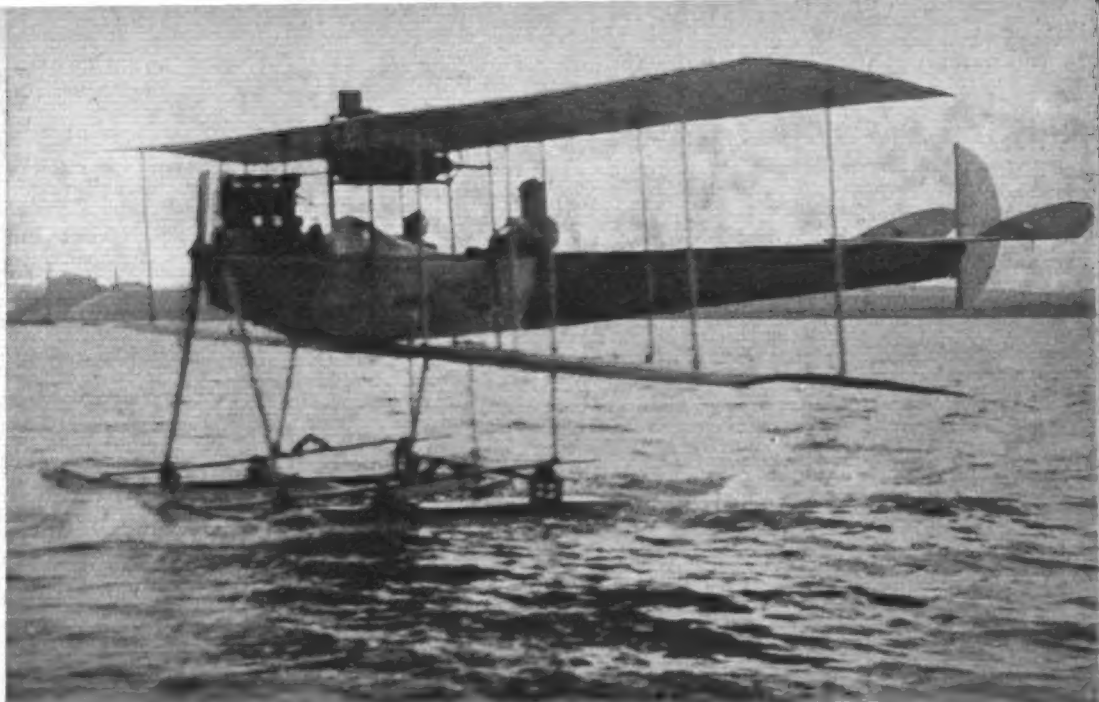
The War prevented the *Daily Mail* Seaplane Race round Britain, for which they were offering a £5,000 prize. We had entered a machine, and war was declared by England on Germany the day I arrived at Calshot in preparation for the race. I was given a cheque for the machine by the Commanding Officer, now Air Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore, D.S.O. This seaplane was fitted with our streamline-rear-end floats, which reduced the shocks on landing; so we were not pleased to see them changed for what we considered were inferior ones with flat backs which hampered badly when alighting on rough water.

The Gosport System

Colonel Smith-Barry and his staff developed an intensified form of training at the Gosport Aerodrome, using Avro 504's. This convinced the powers that be of the suitability of this machine for training purposes—so much so that Lord Weir, when speaking at Newcastle of war experiences, said that they found the timber question very difficult at one period, as the Avro training machine was absorbing about one-third the total supply of aircraft timber, and consequently they had to consider seriously the use of metal.

By this time it was becoming obvious that we required much larger works. Fortunately or unfortunately, Mather and Platt had just completed a huge new extension to their works close to our factory, and as they did not think they would require this new building we rented it from them. I did not relish the idea of being in a rented works. I thought that the Navy would more or less go into the air and that flying boats would be used extensively for linking-up the Empire; I conceived the idea of establishing modern new works and a garden city of our own for employees somewhere on the south coast, where we could build aeroplanes or flying boats, or both, according to the demand, and our employees could breathe God's fresh air.

So my wife and I motored round the Southampton district,



and as soon as I saw the very large field at Hamble, on Southampton Water, I said: "This is our spot." I wired for one of my co-directors to come down and see it. Within a fortnight we had bought the field and a mile of foreshore, well over 100 acres in all; subsequently, we bought about another 200.

We obtained the services of Mr. Harry Fairhurst, the well-known Manchester architect and artist, to design the Hamble works and garden city or, rather, village, containing some 350 artistic houses. We only got as far as building twenty-four of these and then had to give up the scheme at Hamble, as all available building material was required for Government projects, such as the Rolling Mills and Eastleigh Aerodrome. So we had to be satisfied with using Hamble as an experimental establishment.

This dream of mine failed to materialise, as others have done; but one gets a great kick out of life by working for ideals, especially if they are for the benefit of mankind.

Real Expansion

It was most desirable that we should have works of our own, so we decided to buy a piece of triangular-shaped land alongside the Mather and Platt extension that we were occupying. This land was bordered by a railway on one side and roads on the other two. The snag was that a valley stood in the centre and that many thousands of tons of earth would be needed to fill it in. As a local tipping-ground was badly required we decided to buy the site, and for many weeks strings of carts and lorries were tipping earth and rubbish into the yawning chasm.

When it was decided to order large quantities of Avro 504's about eighteen sub-contractors were chosen. I wanted to place parts out and to have four erecting stations: two of our own, one in Manchester and the other at Hamble; one operated by Brush Electric at their Loughborough (Leicestershire) works, and one by Grahame-White at Hendon. The rest of the sub-contractors would make parts. But they were all against it; the excuse being that a general parcelling-out of erection would be safer in case of being bombed; actually, of course, they thought it a



1912 at Brooklands: The Avro 500 (50 h.p. Gnome rotary engine) from which was developed the 504. Mr. F. P. Raynham did a lot of flying on this machine. (*Flight* photograph.)